

him." Elian was begging for milk; his mother had given him her sweater to protect him from the chilly waters.

Mr. Fernandez and Ms. Horta dozed off again. Hours later they were awakened by sharks nipping at their legs. (Both showed me their scars: Mr. Fernandez has several dozen small tooth marks on his ankles; Ms. Horta has three larger wounds on her thighs.)

They were alone. The rope that held the inner tubes together had come loose as they slept. Mr. Fernandez, who had tried to lift the others' spirits, found himself losing hope. "I'm tired," he told Ms. Horta. "I can't make it. I want to die."

As night fell, the couple saw lights in the distance. They tried swimming toward shore, but the current was against them. Again they slept.

They awoke at dawn on Thanksgiving Day. Closer to shore, they began swimming toward land. They arrived in Key Biscayne, Fla., yacht harbor. They had made it.

Exhausted and dehydrated, they collapsed. Later Mr. Fernandez, lying in bed in a Miami hospital, told police there might be other survivors. A cop showed him a photo: "Did this little kid come with you?"

"Yes, Is he alive?" Elian had made it too.

After leaving the hospital, Mr. Fernandez and Ms. Horta went straight to the immigration office and began the process of becoming Americans. Their new lives are a classic immigrant struggle. Ms. Horta is going to school to learn English. Mr. Fernandez, the erstwhile five-star chef, is looking for work; last week he had an interview for a job washing cars at an auto dealership.

Nivado Fernandez is full of faith in his new country. "I was born on July 3, 1967," he says, "I was born again on Nov. 25, 1999, because that's when I came to the land of liberty." Would he do it again if he knew how harrowing the journey would be? "Yes. Even if I died in the middle of the sea, I would have died with dignity, trying to come to this country."

Arianne Horta longs to be reunited with Estefani, her five-year-old daughter. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, the selfsame agency that is demanding Elian's immediate deportation in the name of family reunification, tells Horta it can't do anything about her little girl until Ms. Horta attains residency status, which won't happen until next year. In contrast to Elian's father, last seen ranting on ABC's "Nightline" about his desire to assassinate U.S. politicians, Ms. Horta maintains a quiet dignity. "I cry a lot," she says.

This week Congress will take up legislation to declare Elian Gonzalez a U.S. citizen. It should extend the same privilege to Estefani Erera. There's no guarantee that Fidel Castro would allow her to emigrate, but such an action would remove the obstacle on this side of the Florida Straits. Making Estefani an American would be a fitting tribute to her mother's heroism—and to the memories of the 11 who didn't make it.

HONORING THE JEWISH HOME FOR THE AGED ON ITS 85TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to honor an organization that has been an invaluable asset to the New Haven, Connecticut community since

its inception 85 years ago—the Jewish Home for the Aged.

In October, the Jewish Home for the Aged celebrated 85 years of care and service to the elderly of our community. Founded by the Sisters of Zion, what began as a small sanctuary for poor, elderly Jewish men and women without families, has grown into a distinguished and highly respected nursing care facility. Over the years, the home has worked diligently to address the ever-changing needs of our aging population. Throughout its history, quality care has been their prime goal, constantly expanding both in space and services.

Through personal appeals and their first Charity Ball, in 1916 the Sisters of Zion were able to raise the funds necessary to purchase a wood house at 169 Davenport Avenue in New Haven, giving the Jewish Home for the Aged its first residence. In its formative years, the Jewish Home for the Aged was run completely by women, an unique undertaking given the times. Every succession of Board members has had to grapple with the financial realities of caring for the elderly. As a non-profit, the Home has had extraordinary success through a myriad of fund-raising efforts, a strong tradition that continues today. Throughout its rich history, the remarkable success of the Jewish Home for the Aged has been due to the strong leadership and dedication of the staff and administration—our sincere thanks to them for all of their extraordinary efforts.

This past year, the Home suffered an enormous loss with the unexpected passing of its Executive Director, and my dear friend, Rick Wallace. Rick was an incredible leader, committed to overcoming the massive changes and rising costs in health care that have impeded our seniors from accessing quality care. He held a strong belief that in order to meet these new challenges, Jewish organizations throughout the community would have to work together to provide their residents with a continuum of care. Dedicated to the Home's future success, Rick ensured that the Home was a founding member of the Jewish Care Network. Rick dedicated his career to the mission of the Home and it is my hope that they will carry on his strength and vision as they move ahead into the future.

The Jewish Home for the Aged has had an invaluable impact on our community since its founding. I am indeed proud to stand today to honor them as they celebrate their 85th anniversary and to extend my best wishes for continued success.

NORTHERN IRELAND IN CRISIS AS SAINT PATRICK'S DAY APPROACHES

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, next week is Saint Patrick's Day, when so many Irish and their many friends around the globe celebrate the great patron saint's day of honor. This year's Saint Patrick's day was to have held out great hope for lasting peace and justice in the long troubled north of Ireland. The Irish and peace loving people all over the world were joyous last November 29th when the

new Northern Ireland power sharing executive was finally formed and the British government devolved most of home rule to Belfast. Along with the Northern Ireland assembly, north/south and east/west bodies, the future of all of the island of Ireland was bright for peaceful democratic change in the unsatisfactory status quo that has long been the north of Ireland. The Good Friday accord supported by the people of both the north and south of Ireland was finally being implemented and change was to come through democratic means and new power sharing institutions.

It was a step backwards in the search for lasting peace and justice in the north of Ireland when the British Government on February 11, 2000 suspended the power sharing institutions that had been the best chance to produce overall change in the north, including decommissioning.

Regrettably, the Irish peace process since February 11, 2000 is once again in crisis. The most recent announcement that the IRA is withdrawing from their efforts with the arms decommissioning body is another body blow to a fragile and tenuous future in the north of Ireland.

Even after positive steps were being made to resolve the arms issue—the IRA had committed to put them beyond use—the old unionist veto by the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) forced the suspension of power sharing under the threat of resignation by the UUP's First Minister, David Trimble from the new local government. Terms of the Good Friday Accord set out simultaneous time frames for removal of the guns on both sides from Irish politics.

Those who have unilaterally changed its terms and exercised a veto over its operation must explain their intransigence, and be held accountable for failing to carry out the terms of the Good Friday peace accord.

In order to create the climate for arms decommissioning as envisioned by the terms of the Good Friday Accord, power-sharing institutions must be reestablished, sooner rather than later.

The accord itself set a mid-May 2000 time frame for good faith efforts by all sides at getting all of arms decommission in the North Ireland. Regrettably, the institutions that should have been in place for the last 18 months has only been up and running for just the last 10 weeks. Now they have been suspended.

We soon will have the marching season again in the north of Ireland. We cannot let the political vacuum in the north go on indefinitely. We need the political institutions up and running so change can come peacefully through democratic means. Only then can we expect the political process that the Good Friday accord set in motion can help make the guns on both sides in the north, both irrelevant, and unnecessary.

The parties need to get back to the table and fully implement the Good Friday Accord. As Senator George Mitchell has wisely said, history might forgive the failure to reach an agreement in the long conflict over Northern Ireland, but will never forgive the failure to implement one that has been agreed upon by both governments and all of the parties in the long troubled region.

Let us, on this St. Patrick's Day, hope and pray for a united, peaceful Ireland.